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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 30 March 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you of the scores of Palestinian civilian casualties caused by the deliberate and excessive force used by Israel, the occupying Power, against protesters today in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. At least one young Palestinian man has been killed and more than 300 Palestinians have been wounded, some of them critically injured, by the Israeli occupying forces, which fired tear gas canisters, stun grenades and live ammunition at civilians who were taking part in demonstrations in commemoration of the thirty-sixth anniversary of Land Day.

In the Gaza Strip, the occupying forces killed Mahmoud Zaqout, age 19, near the Erez crossing point, in addition to injuring more than 30 other Palestinians at the area of Erez as well as in Khan Younis. In the West Bank, protesters in the Ramallah, Bethlehem and Al-Khalil areas suffered injuries, with the majority injured near the Qalandiya checkpoint between Ramallah and Occupied East Jerusalem. Israel's repression of the Palestinian civilian population on this day also included a complete closure of the West Bank and even more severe restrictions on freedom of movement and particularly access to Occupied East Jerusalem by Palestinians, including access to worship at Al-Haram Al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary) for Friday prayers.

Significantly, despite the restrictive and repressive measures imposed by the occupying Power, major demonstrations to commemorate Land Day were held throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in the cities of East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Al-Khalil, and Nablus as well as in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, it is important to note that thousands of people also participated in demonstrations in Lebanon and Jordan and in solidarity demonstrations held in many other countries around the world to protest against Israel's confiscation of Palestinian land and other illegal and oppressive practices against the Palestinian people and to call for respect for their inalienable rights, including their right to freedom and self-determination in the homeland.

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In this regard, I wish to draw your attention to the communiqué issued today by the Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee in commemoration of Land Day. The communiqué, inter alia, stressed that the land was and still is the essence of this ongoing conflict and affirmed the right of the Palestinian people in their homeland, regardless of the attempts by the occupation to distort or marginalize this conflict and deny the rights of the Palestinian people, who continue to strive to achieve justice, freedom and independence in their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. The centrality of Jerusalem for the achievement of a peaceful and just settlement of this conflict was stressed, with a call to protect the City as a symbol of religious and human tolerance, to affirm its Palestinian and Arab identity, and to reject the occupying Power's unlawful and provocative policies of settlement colonization and annexation, displacement, Judaization and racism in the City. The communiqué also emphasized that the occupying Power's continued denial of Palestinian rights and policy of destruction of the two-State solution through its insidious settlement campaign in the Palestinian Territory will lead to disastrous consequences affecting not just Palestine and Israel but the region and the global community as well. In this regard, the centrality of resolving the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, for achieving peace, stability and security in the region was underscored.

Regrettably, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to ignore the international community, to flout the long-standing parameters of the two-decades-old Middle East peace process — founded upon relevant Security Council resolutions, the land-for-peace principle and the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, which forms the core of the Arab Peace Initiative — and to grossly violate international law, including perpetration of grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This includes Israel's ongoing illegal settlement campaign throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem, by which the occupying Power is confiscating and colonizing more and more Palestinian land, with the clear and deliberate intention to illegally annex those lands, further destroying the contiguity and integrity of the Palestinian Territory and destroying the prospects for realizing, and the viability of, the two-State solution.

Such illegal schemes are borne out by the daily illegal and provocative actions undertaken by the Government of Israel as well as its extremist settlers rampaging throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and further borne out by the recent revelation of plans by the Ministry of Defense of Israel for the confiscation of hundreds of thousands more dunums of Palestinian land for the expansion of its vast illegal network of settlements. In this regard, it has been revealed that Israel has already marked 569 parcels of Palestinian land, totalling at least 620,000 dunums (approximately 155,000 acres), which constitute another 10 per cent of the West Bank, for the illegal construction and expansion of hundreds of illegal Israeli settlements and so-called outposts.

We thus call urgently on the international community, including the Security Council, to give due attention to all of these illegal Israeli actions, measures and schemes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to act collectively to demand an immediate end to them, and to demand that Israel, the occupying Power, respect its legal obligations and cease its flagrant defiance of international law and the global demands for respect. The international community must uphold its responsibilities in this regard. The failure to hold Israel accountable

for its crimes and human rights violations against the Palestinian people and its constant and reckless provocation and incitement will only allow for the further destabilization of the critical situation on the ground, leading us further away from realizing the peace and stability we have for so long been seeking, with far-reaching negative consequences.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 421 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 13 March 2012 (A/ES-10/549-S/2012/154) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations